

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 01837 280602Z  
ACTION EA-12

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H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS : PINT, SHUM, TW  
SUBJECT : MAGAZINE SUSPENSION

REF: (A) TAIPEI 1616, (B) TAIPEI 1783, (C) TAIPEI 1782

1. A GIO DECISION TO SUSPEND TEMPORARILY ALL APPLICATIONS TO PUBLISH NEW MAGAZINES WAS REPORTED MARCH 17 IN THE LIEN HO PAO (LHP) AND IN GARBLED FORM BY THE CHINA NEWS. THE LHP ACCOUNT, WHICH APPEARS TO BE THE MORE ACCURATE OF THE TWO, CLAIMS THAT OF THE MORE THAN 1900 MAGAZINE LICENSES GIO HAS GRANTED, SOME 400 HAVE BEEN EITHER SUSPENDED OR REVOKED. (NOTE: SUSPENSIONS CAN BE ORDERED AS A WARNING OR PUNISHMENT, AND LICENSES CAN BE REVOKED FOR OFFENSES OR IF A MAGAZINE FAILS TO PUBLISH ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS.) LHP SAID THAT ALTHOUGH 1577 MAGAZINES REMAIN ON THE GIO BOOKS, ONLY AROUND 100 ARE REGULARLY OFFERED FOR SALE.

2. ACCORDING TO ONE GIO SOURCE, THE EXPLANATION FOR THE ACTION IS REPORTEDLY TO CURB ILLEGAL PROFITS, DEFINED AS A FORM OF BLACKMAIL IN WHICH MINOR PUBLICATIONS THREATEN TO PUBLISH UNFLATTERING ARTICLES ABOUT INDIVIDUALS OR FIRMS UNLESS THEY MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLICATION,  
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USUALLY BY OVERPAYING FOR ADVERTISING. (FYI: WE DO NOT KNOW HOW WIDESPREAD THIS PRACTICE MIGHT BE; HOWEVER, A U.S. CORRESPONDENT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW WITH A LOCAL PERSONALITY WAS ONCE ASKED HOW MUCH ADVERTISING THE SUBJECT WAS EXPECTED TO BUY IN RETURN FOR THE STORY.) OTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE SUSPENSION, WHICH ACCORDING TO GIO WILL

BE FROM MARCH 1, 1978 TO FEBRUARY 28, 1979, INCLUDE GROC SENSITIVITIES TO RECENT EXTENSIVE PERIODICAL COVERAGE OF NOVEMBER ELECTION ISSUES, THE CHUNGLI RIOT, AND STATEMENTS BY INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS, AS IN THE CASE OF THE CHIN JIH FU HUI (REFTEL A).

3. INDEPENDENT LEGISLATOR KANG NING-HSIANG HAS HIS OWN PERSONAL VIEW. HE TOLD EMBOFF MARCH 22 THAT HE HAD PLANNED TO START A NEW MAGAZINE AND HAD FORMALLY APPLIED FOR A LICENSE. SHORTLY THEREAFTER HE WAS TOLD BY CITY OFFICIALS CONCERNED OF THE NEW RULING AND THAT HIS MAGAZINE (YACHOU CHENG LUN -- ASIAN REVIEW) WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BEGIN PUBLICATION. THIS WAS THE FIRST NEWS KANG HAD OF THE NEW REGULATION. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO PROOF THAT THE RULING WAS DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY AGAINST HIM (KANG THINKS HIS APPLICATION PRECIPITATED IT) OR OTHER INDEPENDENTS, IT WILL LIMIT THEIR OPTIONS IN THE MAGAZINE FIELD, ADDING TO THEIR GENERAL FRUSTRATION OVER THE ROC'S FLAT BAN ON ANY NEW NEWSPAPERS. LIFTING OF THIS GOVERNMENT BAN WAS AN ISSUE IN THE CAMPAIGN OF ILAN'S INDEPENDENT MAGISTRATE LIN I-HSIUNG AND OTHERS LAST NOVEMBER.

4. A GIO OFFICIAL RECENTLY COMMENTED (SOMEWHAT DISINGENUOUSLY WE THINK) TO REPORTING OFFICER THAT THERE WAS TOO MUCH CONFUSION OVER WHICH MAGAZINES SERIOUSLY INTENDED TO CONTINUE PUBLICATION AND NOTED HIS HOPE THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE ONE-YEAR MORATORIUM WOULD PROVIDE GIO WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP EXISTING MAGAZINES WITH "ANY DIFFICULTIES THEY MIGHT HAVE." A MOFA OFFICIAL PRESENT ARGUED UNCONVINCINGLY THAT ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN INCONSISTENT PERIODS IN GROC ATTITUDES TOWARD BOTH PUBLICATIONS AND CENSORSHIP, THAT ON BALANCE THE RECORD IN RECENT YEARS HAD BEEN TOWARD A MORE LIBERAL PRESS.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THERE MAY BE LEGITIMATE PROBLEMS IN THE PUBLISHING WORLD WHICH GIO HOPES TO CORRECT BY THIS MOVE, WE ARE CONTINUING TO EXAMINE OTHER POSSIBLE MOTIVES. DURING 1974 TO 1975 THERE WAS A SIMILAR SUSPENSION OF APPLICATIONS FOR PUBLISHING MAGAZINES WHICH APPLIED TO TAIPEI CITY ONLY (WHERE TWO-THIRDS OF TAIWAN'S MAGAZINES ARE PUBLISHED). AT THAT TIME GIO OFFERED A SIMILAR EXPLANATION AS IN THE PRESENT SUSPENSION, THAT IT HOPED TO "HELP THE MAGAZINES EMBARK ON A NORMAL TRACK." IT IS POSSIBLE THE PERIOD OF RELATIVE FREEDOM ENJOYED BY THE PRESS DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD MAY BE FOLLOWED BY A SUBTLE BUT EFFECTIVE GROC EFFORT TO RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE. IF THE GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS SUCH A MOVE IT WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH THE SMALL NUMBER OF AGGRESSIVE

MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS AND WRITERS WHO HAVE TASTED RELATIVELY  
GREATER FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND WHO TEND TO REGARD THEM-  
SELVES AS THE CUTTING EDGE OF THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS.  
UNGER

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## Message Attributes

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